

deficit the previous year, according to Office des Changes data. The IMF reports a \$212 million deficit in 1986. The worst deficit was in 1982 — MD 11,437.4 million (\$1,899 million) — after which Rabat called in the IMF.

During his visit, Camdessus welcomed the government's reforms and the economic upturn. However, he had reservations about aspects of policy, arguing that some reforms could be improved to create a more effective economy. He emphasised the need to cut unproductive expenditure and addressed the problem of unemployment. This is of great concern to many Moroccans, who fear reforms will lead to more job losses, particularly from the unproductive public sector companies.

Camdessus argues that the private sector must be the main source of new employment. The new president of the national employers organisation has proposed the establishment of training programmes for unemployed, educated Moroccans, whose numbers are increasing.

IN BRIEF

- International companies have been invited to bid for earthworks and resurfacing of 18.5 kilometres of canal, the latest tender issued for the Haouz irrigation scheme. Closing date for bids for the work, financed by the Kuwait-based Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development and the OPEC Fund for International Development, is 5 September. Client is **Office Regional de Mise en Valeur Agricole du Haouz (ORMVAH)**.

- Office National des Postes & Telecommunications (ONPT) has issued a tender — No 24 DAL 1/2 — for the supply of telephone boxes and shelters. Closing date for bids is 26 September.

- The take-over of the disputed Western Sahara by a joint UN/Organisation of African Unity (OAU) administration would be acceptable, prior to a referendum on independence, if Morocco refused direct negotiations, Polisario said in a 29 July communique issued in Algiers. UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has drawn up a peace plan for presentation to both sides.

- A new port, to handle oil cargoes, has opened at Mohammedia, near Casablanca. Total cost is put at MD 1,155 million (\$138 million), with the state providing MD 800 million (\$95.7 million) and **Office d'Exploitation des Ports (ODEP)** the rest. The cornerstone was laid by King Hassan in July 1980. It is calculated the new port will save **Societe Cherifienne des Petroles, Societe Anonyme Marocaine de l'Industrie du Raffinage (SAMIR)** and **Societe Marocaine de Stockage (Sommas)**, all of which have facilities at the port, an estimated \$20 million a year. The port will improve the throughput of oil imports and may allow for export of refined products.

- Sugar production will rise by about 10 per cent in 1988, the fortnightly International Sugar Report published by West Germany's **FO Licht** forecasts. Production was 443,000 tonnes in 1987 — 365,000 tonnes of beet sugar and 78,000 tonnes of cane. The area under sugar beet has declined due to heavy rains at planting time, but yields for both crops are believed good. On this basis, imports should fall.

- South Korea's **Daewoo Corporation** has opened a representative office in Rabat. The telephone number is 749-31/749-35, and telefax is 749-75.

- Spain's two enclaves on the North African coast, Ceuta and Melilla, will become "integral parts of Spain," with some degree of self-rule, under new legislation being prepared in Madrid. Morocco claims the cities, but King Hassan has not pressed the point in recent months as relations with Spain have been exceptionally good (MEED 15:7:88). Under the new legislation, presented by Felipe Gonzalez's socialist government, the enclaves will have an autonomous parliament with some administrative authority.

OMAN

Joint venture takes two awards

The local/UK joint venture **Wimpey Alawi** has recently won contracts together valued at about RO 8.8 million (\$22.9 million). The two deals are for the construction of an officers' mess complex and a set of road improvements at Buraimi, on the border with Abu Dhabi (MEED 21:11:87).

The officers' mess contract — valued at around RO 5 million (\$13 million) — is for the royal guard brigade. The project calls for construction of a series of low rise buildings on a new site at Seeb, 50 kilometres east of Muscat. It will provide a mess, military and civilian accommodation, and recreational facilities. The contract includes roads, landscaping and erection of boundary walls. Work is already under way and is for completion in 15 months. Design is by **Huckle & Partners (Oman)**, which is also supervising construction.

Wimpey Alawi's second contract, valued at about RO 3.8 million (\$9.9 million) is for three road upgrading schemes in and around Buraimi. The 24-kilometre single-track road from Buraimi to Mahadah is to be improved and asphalted. Several roads in the urban area of the Buraimi oasis, also single-track, are to be asphalted. A further 7.5-kilometre section of urban dual-carriageway is to be resurfaced. The contract includes bridges, culverts, intersections and drainage works. Design and construction supervision is by Lebanon's **Conser Consulting Engineers**.

IN BRIEF

- The Housing Ministry has let three contracts to local companies for construction of 90 new homes. **National Trading Company** has a RO 1.5 million (\$3.9 million) contract to build 50 houses at Nizwa. A second contract, to erect 30 homes at Haima, has gone to **Mustafa Ahmed Salman Trading Establishment** at RO 683,000 (\$1.8 million). **Al-Marhoon General Trading & Contracting Company** has a RO 200,000 (\$519,480) contract for 10 houses at Shaser.

- The Commerce and Industry Ministry has inaugurated the new beach motel at Sur, built at a cost of RO 850,000 (\$2.2 million), of which RO 250,000 (\$650,000) was provided by the authorities.

PAKISTAN

Bids in for hydro scheme

The local **National Construction Company (NCC)** has submitted the lowest of four bids for a contract to carry out civil works for units 9 and 10 of the Mangla hydroelectric project on the Jhelum river, Punjab province (MEED 22:4:88).

The bidders are:

- National Construction Company** (Pakistan) — Rs 327 million (\$18.4 million)
- Haydari Construction Company** (Pakistan) — Rs 393 million (\$22.1 million)
- National Construction** (Pakistan) — Rs 404 million (\$22.7 million)
- Dillingham Construction Company** (US) — Rs 488 million (\$27.4 million)

Work is to start in late 1988 for completion in 44 months. Total project cost is \$300 million. Consultant is the local **National Engineering Services (Pakistan — Nespak)** and the client is the Water & Power Development Authority (WAPDA).

IN BRIEF

- The World Bank is to provide a loan of \$200 million in support of the agricultural reforms announced by the caretaker government. The measures will make agriculture more competitive and productive, and bring annual savings of \$50 million. The government is to phase out economic subsidies for chemical fertilisers and private and public tubewells, improve management of water resources, and move towards recovering the full cost of operating and maintaining irrigation facilities.

- The local **National Engineering Services (Pakistan — Nespak)** is to make a detailed feasibility study to upgrade the slum dwellings in Baluchistan province. The report will examine the possibility of providing roads, drainage and sewer systems. The estimated Rs 500 million (\$28.1 million) cost of the project is being funded by a loan from the Manila-based Asian Development Bank.

- Exploratory drilling for oil has increased from 15 to 50 wells a year, according to Bashir Ahmed, permanent secretary at the Petroleum & Natural Resources Ministry. He said the discovery rate has been good, with every fourth well drilled producing oil or gas. Pakistan is producing 50,000 barrels of oil a day, and gas reserves stand at 17.6 million million cubic feet. There are 10 foreign companies prospecting for oil and another 13 waiting for licence.

- Turkish prime minister Turgut Ozal, accompanied by his top economic ministers, is to visit Islamabad in September to sign several economic and trade agreements, local press reports say. The two countries have stepped up economic relations in the past year and plan to collaborate in a number of joint ventures.

- The cabinet's economic committee — the highest economic body in the country — is to establish a trust to provide financial assistance to non-government organisations. The funding will come from central and local government, the private sector and foreign donors. The